



May 4, 2020

FROM:

Friends of Little Saigon  
Board of Directors  
409B Maynard Ave S.  
Seattle, WA 98104

TO:

King County Executive Dow Constantine; Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan; Seattle Deputy Mayor Shefali Ranganathan; Seattle Chief of Police Carmen Best; Seattle City Council

Dear Mayor Durkan, Deputy Mayor Ranganathan, Chief Best, Executive Constantine, and Seattle City Council:

We, the Board of Directors of Friends of Little Saigon (FLS), are writing to you on behalf of the Little Saigon community. We thank you all for your commendable efforts to preserve, protect, and aid our region during this coronavirus crisis. We thank Mayor Durkan and Chief Best for attending our Lunar New Year “Tết” Celebration in January and showing support for FLS and the Little Saigon community.

We are writing to you all to bring attention to an escalating situation in the Little Saigon community that will require thoughtful and intentional planning from the county and city. As you know, our vision is for Little Saigon to be an integral and vibrant part of the Seattle community, and for this to happen, Little Saigon needs to be a safe and attractive space for its businesses, customers, and others in our community.

Unfortunately, Little Saigon has increasingly become a convergence zone of two vulnerable populations: the homeless and Little Saigon businesses, many of which are low-income. We earnestly support the city and county’s efforts to address homelessness in Little Saigon and the entire International District; however, they have also negatively impacted Little Saigon’s viability as a business district and cultural hub. The increased density of people living outside (see images on page 3) has correlated with a marked increase in open-air drug use, rising property crimes, garbage human waste in the right-of-way, and abandoned cars. This has made the area unwelcoming and unsafe for business owners, employees, customers, and residents, who also depend on Little Saigon for their livelihood.

The coronavirus crisis has further exacerbated this issue. We’ve received reports from multiple business owners and customers in Little Saigon of increased open-air drug dealing, acts of vandalism and looting (including Hue Ky Mi Gia, Tan Dinh Deli, Bun & Oc, I-House Salon, and Khang Hoa Duong, Seattle Indian Health Board, Thanh Son Tofu, Mi La Cay, Spring Roll House, Mar Properties), car break-ins and window smashing, proliferation of tents along Weller St. by the Navigation Center—including a reported shooting on April 7th and multiple encampment fires outside of 1225 S Weller St. We are already working with the CID public safety



coordinator, Tim Hirokawa, and West Precinct Officer, Judinna Gulpan, to address some of these issues, but we are afraid that these are just short-term solutions.

The Little Saigon neighborhood does a lot to support low-income and homeless populations, including sharing space with the Navigation Center (606 12th Ave S), the newly relocated enhanced shelter (1215 E Fir), two new low-income housing projects, An Lac Apartments (1253 S Jackson), Bob & Marcia Almquist Place (501 Rainier), and right-of-ways for unsheltered living. We understand that it is convenient for the city and county to merge these two already-marginalized populations, but the potential consequence is the loss of a cultural gem and exacerbation of the public health and homelessness crisis.

We ask that this matter be given expedited attention by the City of Seattle and King County. We ask for more proactive, long-term strategies for addressing this issue and request that FLS be included in discussions, so we can collectively determine an approach that is more *thoughtful* and *durable* than convenient, such as:

- Increase cleaning and sanitizing Little Saigon's streets, so it's a welcoming and safe place for our community
- Dedicating outreach and referral services to people in crisis, and increasing police presence in Little Saigon through bike patrols and mobile precinct to prevent, deter, and address crime
- Ramping up efforts to stabilize the homeless through shelter, moving them into more permanent housing, and implementing assistance programs to keep them in the housing

Thank you for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors

Friends of Little Saigon

[info@flsseattle.org](mailto:info@flsseattle.org)

Co-signed by:

- |  |  |                                    |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Chinatown International District Public Safety Council                                  | 5. International Community Health Services (ICHHS)           | 13. Tamarind Tree Restaurant       |
| 2. Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation & Development Authority (SCIDpda) | 6. Seattle Indian Health Board (SIHB)                        | 14. Spring Roll House              |
| 3. Chinatown International District Business Improvement Area (CIDBIA)                     | 7. Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience | 15. Ngoc Tri Jewelry               |
| 4. InterIm Community Development Association (InterIm CDA)                                 | 8. Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS)              | 16. Tan Dinh Deli                  |
|  | 9. Marpac Construction                                       | 17. Thanh Son Tofu                 |
|  | 10. Zeroplus Architects                                      | 18. King's Oriental Foods Co.      |
|  | 11. Lam's Seafood Market                                     | 19. Mi La Cay Restaurant           |
|  | 12. Pho Bac Restaurant                                       | 20. Chu Minh Tofu                  |
|  |  | 21. Bun & Oc                       |
|  |  | 22. Giap Dat DMD General Dentistry |
|  |  | 23. Charlie Dang Tax & Accounting  |



Below are images of the encampment on S Weller St between 12th Ave S and Rainier Ave S.

